

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 4-9 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claim 1 is amended to incorporate features recited in claim 8, and further amended to recite additional features disclosed in the specification at, for example, Fig. 4; page 7, lines 17-22; and page 14, lines 3-10. Claims 2, 4, 6 and 7 are similarly amended. Claim 8 is amended in view of the amendments made to claim 1.

Claim 9 is added to recite additional features disclosed in the specification at, for example, page 13, lines 1-10, and page 14, lines 11-19.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank Examiners Evanisko and Williams for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Luo, during the November 7, 2006 personal interview. The substance of the personal interview is incorporated in the following remarks.

The Office Action objects to claims 6 and 7. Claims 6 and 7 are amended to obviate informalities, as the Examiner requested. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to claims 6 and 7 is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 2, 4-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 04020430 to Kimura ("Kimura"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is amended to recite a pressure plate having a width that is substantially same as the width of the sheet, the pressure plate causing the sheets to curl in the sheet width direction. Claims 2, 4, 6 and 7 are similarly amended. As discussed during the personal interview, Kimura does not disclose or suggest this feature.

For at least the above reasons, Kimura does not disclose or suggest each and every element recited in claims 1, 2, 4, 6 and 7, and claims 5 and 8 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 4-8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

Claim 9 is patentable at least in view of the patentability of claim 1, from which it depends, as well as for additional features it recites. In particular, Kimura does not disclose or suggest sheets having a tendency of curling along a sheet length direction when not being pressed by the forcible curling unit, as recited in claim 9.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 2, and 4-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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